That which is claimed is:

1.   A method of managing communication between a networkable device and a supervisory device configured to monitor and/or control the networkable device, the method comprising:

5   transmitting an affiliation request message from the networkable device, the affiliation request message requesting an affiliation request response from another networkable device;

determining an affiliation request response status for the transmitted affiliation request message;

10   transitioning the networkable device to an affiliation state responsive to the determined affiliation request response status; and

communicating between the networkable device and the supervisory device based on the affiliation state.

15   2.   A method according to Claim 1:

wherein the networkable device comprises a first networkable device;

wherein determining an affiliation request response status comprises receiving at least one affiliation request response message identifying a second networkable device;

20   wherein transitioning the networkable device to an affiliation state comprises adopting a governed state for the first networkable device with respect to the second networkable device responsive to receiving the at least one affiliation request response message; and

wherein communicating between the networkable device and the supervisory

25   device comprises communicating between the first networkable device and the supervisory device via the second networkable device responsive to the governed state of the first networkable device.

3.   A method according to Claim 2:

30   wherein receiving at least one affiliation request response message identifying a second networkable device comprises receiving respective affiliation responses to the affiliation request message from respective ones of a plurality of second networkable devices; and

wherein adopting a governed state comprises:

selecting one of the second networkable devices; and

adopting a governed state for the first networkable device in relation to the selected second networkable device.

5   4.   A method according to Claim 3, wherein selecting one of the second networkable devices comprises selecting one of the second networkable devices based on at least one attribute thereof according to a predetermined selection rule.

5.   A method according to Claim 2, further comprising:

10   receiving a resignation message from the second networkable device;

adopting a new governed state for the first networkable device in relation to a third networkable device identified in the resignation message; and

communicating between the first networkable device and the supervisory device via the third networkable device responsive to the new governed state of the

15   first networkable device.

6.   A method according to Claim 2, wherein communicating between the first networkable device and the supervisory device comprises communicating status and/or control information regarding the first networkable device in an electronic

20   message communicated between the second networkable device and the supervisory device.

7.   A method according to Claim 1:

wherein determining an affiliation request response status comprises detecting

25   a failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message according to a predetermined failure criterion;

wherein transitioning the networkable device to an affiliation state comprises transitioning the networkable device to a governor state responsive to detecting the failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message; and

30   wherein communicating comprises communicating directly between the networkable device and the supervisory device responsive to the governor state.

8.   A method according to Claim 7, wherein the failure criterion comprises at least one of a passage of a response interval and a number of failures to receive responses to affiliation request messages.

5   9.   A method according to Claim 7, wherein the networkable device comprises a first networkable device, and further comprising:

receiving a governor declaration message from a second networkable device at the first networkable device; and

transitioning the first networkable device to an unaffiliated state responsive to

10   receiving the governor declaration message.

10.   A method according to Claim 9, wherein transitioning the first networkable device to an unaffiliated state comprises transitioning the first networkable device to the unaffiliated state if the governor declaration message meets

15   a predetermined criterion.

11.   A method according to Claim 9, further comprising transmitting at least one resignation message to at least one third networkable device responsive to receiving the governor declaration message.

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12.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the networkable device comprises a node of an internet protocol (IP) network.

13.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein transmitting an affiliation

25   request message comprises broadcasting the affiliation request message to devices of a first subnet including the networkable device.

14.   A method according to Claim 13, wherein transmitting an affiliation request message comprises broadcasting the affiliation request message to devices of

30   a second subnet via a repeater node in the first subnet.

15.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the networkable device comprises an uninterruptible power supply.

16.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein transmitting an affiliation request message comprises transmitting the affiliation request message over at least one of a wireless transmission medium, a wireline transmission medium, and an optical transmission medium.

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17.   A method of managing communications of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS), the method comprising:

transmitting an affiliation request message from the UPS, the affiliation request message requesting an affiliation request response from another networkable

10   device;

determining an affiliation request response status for the transmitted affiliation request message;

transitioning the UPS to an affiliation state responsive to the determined affiliation request response status; and

15   communicating between the UPS and a supervisory device configured to control and/or monitor the UPS based on the affiliation state.

18.   A method according to Claim 17:

wherein determining an affiliation request response status comprises receiving

20   at least one affiliation request response message identifying a second networkable device;

wherein transitioning the networkable device to an affiliation state comprises adopting a governed state for the UPS in relation to the second networkable device responsive to receiving the at least one affiliation request response message; and

25   wherein communicating between the UPS and the supervisory device comprises communicating between the UPS and the supervisory device via the second networkable device responsive to the governed state of the UPS.

19.   A method according to Claim 18, wherein communicating between the

30   UPS and the supervisory device via the second networkable device comprises including status and/or control information regarding the UPS in an electronic message communicated between the second networkable device and the supervisory device.

20. A method according to Claim 18, wherein the second networkable device comprises a second UPS.

21. A method according to Claim 17:

5   wherein determining an affiliation request response status comprises detecting a failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message according to a predetermined failure criterion;

wherein transitioning the UPS to an affiliation state comprises transitioning the UPS to a governor state responsive to detecting the failure to receive a response to

10   the affiliation request message; and

wherein communicating between the UPS and a supervisory device comprises communicating directly between the UPS and the supervisory device responsive to the governor state.

15   22. A method according to Claim 17, wherein the UPS comprises a node of an internet protocol (IP) network.

23. A method according to Claim 22, wherein transmitting an affiliation request message comprises broadcasting the affiliation request message to devices of

20   a first subnet including the UPS.

24. A method according to Claim 23, wherein transmitting an affiliation request message comprises conveying the affiliation request message to a second subnet via a repeater in the first subnet.

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25. A device, comprising:
functional electronic circuitry; and
a communication circuit operatively associated with the functional electronic circuitry and configured to transmit an affiliation request message requesting an

30   affiliation request response from a networkable device, to determine an affiliation request response status for the transmitted affiliation request message, to transition to an affiliation state responsive to the determined affiliation request response status, and to communicate with a supervisory device regarding the functional electronic circuitry based on the affiliation state.

26.   A device according to Claim 25, wherein the communications circuit is configured to receive at least one affiliation request response message identifying a networkable device, to adopt a governed state with respect to the networkable device responsive to receiving the at least one affiliation request response message and to communicate with the supervisory device via the networkable device responsive to the governed state.

27.   A device according to Claim 25, wherein the communications circuit is configured to detect a failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message according to a predetermined failure criterion, to transition to a governor state responsive to detecting the failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message, and to directly communicate with the supervisory device responsive to the governor state.

28.   A device according to Claim 25, wherein the communications circuit comprises a communications circuit that serves as a node of an internet protocol (IP) network.

29.   A device according to Claim 25, wherein the functional circuitry comprises uninterruptible power supply circuitry.

30.   An uninterruptible power supply (UPS), comprising:
power conversion circuitry; and
a communication circuit operatively associated with the power conversion circuitry and configured to transmit an affiliation request message requesting an affiliation request response from a networkable device, to determine an affiliation request response status for the transmitted affiliation request message, to transition to an affiliation state responsive to the determined affiliation request response status, and to communicate with a supervisory device regarding the power conversion circuitry based on the affiliation state.

31.   A device according to Claim 30, wherein the communications circuit is configured to receive at least one affiliation request response message identifying a

networkable device, to adopt a governed state in relation to the networkable device responsive to receiving the at least one affiliation request response message and to communicate with the supervisory device via the networkable device responsive to the governed state.

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32.   A device according to Claim 30, wherein the communications circuit is configured to detect a failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message according to a predetermined failure criterion, to transition to a governor state responsive to detecting the failure to receive a response to the affiliation request

10   message, and to directly communicate with the supervisory device responsive to the governor state.

33.   A device according to Claim 30, wherein the communications circuit comprises a Web card configured to serve as a node of an internet protocol (IP)

15   network.

34.   A computer program product for managing communication between a networkable device and supervisory device configured to monitor and/or control the networkable device, the computer program product comprising program code

20   embodied in a computer readable medium, the program code comprising:

program code configured to transmit an affiliation request message from a networkable device, the affiliation request message requesting an affiliation request response from another networkable device;

program code configured to determine an affiliation request response status for

25   the transmitted affiliation request message;

program code configured to transition the networkable device to an affiliation state responsive to the determined affiliation request response status; and

program code configured to route communications between the networkable device and a supervisory device based on the affiliation state.

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35.   A computer program product according to Claim 34:

wherein the networkable device comprises a first networkable device;

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wherein the program code configured to determine an affiliation request response status comprises program code configured to receive at least one affiliation request response message identifying a second networkable device;

wherein the program code configured to transition the networkable device to

5   an affiliation state comprises program code configured to adopt a governed state for the first networkable device in relation to the second networkable device responsive to receiving the at least one affiliation request response message; and

wherein the program code configured to route communications comprises program code configured to route communications between the first networkable

10   device and the supervisory device via the second networkable device responsive to the governed state of the first networkable device.

36.   A computer program product according to Claim 34:

wherein the program code configured to determine an affiliation request

15   response status comprises program code configured to detect a failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message according to a predetermined failure criterion;

wherein the program code configured to transition the networkable device to an affiliation state comprises program code configured to transition the networkable

20   device to a governor state responsive to detecting the failure to receive a response to the affiliation request message; and

wherein the program code configured to route communications comprises program code configured to directly route communications between the networkable device and the supervisory device responsive to the governor state.

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